

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION

Application for : 6,321,381
Reissue of
Patent No.

Applicants : Henry C. Yuen et al.

Application No. : 10/720,006 Confirmation No. : 3985

Filed : November 20, 2003

For : APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR IMPROVED
PARENTAL CONTROL OF TELEVISION USE

Art Unit : 2622

Examiner : Sherrie Y. Hsia

New York, New York 10036
May 19, 2009

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

REQUEST FOR CORRECTED FILING RECEIPT

Sir:

Enclosed is a marked-up copy of a Filing Receipt issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO") in connection with the above-identified patent application. The marked-up Filing Receipt shows three changes that applicants respectfully request be entered.

The domestic priority data of this patent application is currently listed as:

This application is a REI of 09/558,536 04/26/2000
PAT 6,321,381
which is a CON of 09/344,634 06/25/1999 PAT
6,072,520
which is a CON of 08/684,678 07/19/1996 PAT
5,949,471
and is a CON of 08/138,632 10/15/1993 ABN
and is a CIP of 08/118,001 09/08/1993 PAT 5,382,983
and is a CON of 08/100,616 07/29/1993 ABN

under the "Domestic Priority data as claimed by applicant"
section of the Filing Receipt, but should instead be listed as:

This application is a REI of 09/558,536 04/26/2000
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as indicated on the copy of the first page of corresponding
originally issued U.S. Patent No. 6,321,381 for this reissue
case, included herewith.

Applicants respectfully request that the USPTO issue a corrected Filing Receipt reflecting the three changes detailed above by applicants. The error in the Filing Receipt is believed to be the responsibility of the USPTO. However, if for any reason the USPTO deems the error to be applicants' responsibility, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any fee that may be due in connection with this Request to Deposit Account No. 06-1075 (Order No. 004033-0030, GS-030 Cont. 4 Reissue).

Respectfully submitted,

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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING or 371(c) DATE	GRP ART UNIT	FIL FEE REC'D	ATTY. DOCKET NO.	TOT CLAIMS	IND CLAIMS
10/720,006	11/20/2003	2622	2682	GS-030 Cont 4 RE	76	13

CONFIRMATION NO. 3985

UPDATED FILING RECEIPT

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ROPES & GRAY LLP
PATENT DOCKETING 39/361
1211 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
NEW YORK, NY 10036-8704

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ROPES & GRAY LLP - IP DOCKETING
REFERRED TO _____
NOTED BY _____

Date Mailed: 04/30/2009

Receipt is acknowledged of this reissue patent application. The application will be taken up for examination in due course. Applicant will be notified as to the results of the examination. Any correspondence concerning the application must include the following identification information: the U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER, FILING DATE, NAME OF APPLICANT, and TITLE OF INVENTION. Fees transmitted by check or draft are subject to collection. Please verify the accuracy of the data presented on this receipt. If an error is noted on this Filing Receipt, please submit a written request for a Filing Receipt Correction. Please provide a copy of this Filing Receipt with the changes noted thereon. If you received a "Notice to File Missing Parts" for this application, please submit any corrections to this Filing Receipt with your reply to the Notice. When the USPTO processes the reply to the Notice, the USPTO will generate another Filing Receipt incorporating the requested corrections

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Assignment For Published Patent Application

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Power of Attorney: The patent practitioners associated with Customer Number 75563

Domestic Priority data as claimed by applicant

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Foreign Applications

If Required, Foreign Filing License Granted: 03/09/2004

The country code and number of your priority application, to be used for filing abroad under the Paris Convention, is **US 10/720,006**

Projected Publication Date: None, application is not eligible for pre-grant publication

Non-Publication Request: No

Early Publication Request: No

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APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR IMPROVED PARENTAL CONTROL OF TELEVISION USE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a continuation of patent application Ser. No. 09/344,634, filed Jun. 25, 1999 now U.S. Pat. No. 6,072,520, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application No. 08/684,678 filed Jul. 19, 1996, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,471, issued Sep. 7, 1999, which is a continuation of patent application Ser. No. 08/138,632 filed Oct. 15, 1993, abandoned, which is a continuation in part of patent application Ser. No. 08/118,001 (now U.S. Pat. No. 5,382,983 issued Jan. 17, 1995) filed Sep. 8, 1993, which is a continuation of patent application Ser. No. 08/100,616 (now abandoned) filed Jul. 29, 1993, incorporated herein by this reference, as though set forth in full.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to the controlled use of television receivers and particularly to parental control of the use of television receivers and associated equipment, such as cable boxes.

2. Description of the Related Art

Parental control is presently available in some television receivers, video cassette recorders, and cable boxes on a limited basis. In these devices, certain channels may be locked out. However, the locking out of channels does not prevent children from spending excessive time watching television instead of studying or doing other things. Other devices limit the amount of time, but do not provide for selective viewing to prevent viewing of undesirable programs. One example of parental control at the television receiver is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 4,510,623 to Bonneau et al. A local oscillator for electronically tuning the television is controlled by a phase lock loop which is responsive to the output signal from a microprocessor. The microprocessor provides the output signal only if the selected channel has not been inhibited. To inhibit a channel for a period of time, the user enters a lockout code which is stored in a non-volatile memory. The memory provides one input to the microprocessor which is compared to the input by a user selecting a channel to be viewed. The microprocessor determines whether the selected channel is one of the inhibited channels and, if it is, does not generate the necessary signal for tuning to that channel.

Another prior art patent that discloses the blocking out of selected channels is U.S. Pat. No. 4,718,107 to John J. Hayes. The parental control disclosed in the Hayes patent is provided in a converter box. In this system, if the access code is forgotten, the converter box has to be taken to the business office of the CATV system to have the memory purged of the blocked-out channel information and the access code, and a new access code must be entered. In the Hayes device, only selected channels can be clocked which does not allow the selected blocking of particular programs in a channel.

In general, the present state of the art concerning parental control suffers from a number of drawbacks. In particular, the control is very limited and does not provide a parent the broad control desirable for controlling the viewing or use of a television by a child.

Some cable channels are scrambled and must be decoded by a cable box before being sent to a television tuned to

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channel 3 or channel 4. In this case, controlling the tuning of the television is ineffective, because the television is always tuned to channel 3 or 4. Even if a particular channel is blocked in the cable box or converter box, this does not provide the parent selective control over programs within a channel.

Accordingly, there is a need in the art for apparatus and methods for improved parental control of television use to provide a parent broad control for both blocking unacceptable programs and/or selecting acceptable programs that are available for viewing. There is also a need in the art for improved parental control of multiple televisions attached to a common signal source.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the present invention, apparatus and methods for improved parental control of television viewing are provided.

In an embodiment of the present invention, the apparatus includes means for blocking the viewing of programs, each having a program identifier, coupled to a television signal source and having a first output, cable box means for converting television signals coupled to the first output of the means for blocking, and means for selecting programs to be blocked coupled to the means for blocking.

In a specific embodiment the means for blocking further comprises means for decoding and expanding a compressed code, representative of, and compressed in length from, the combination of a channel, a date, a time-of-day, and a length for a program.

In another specific embodiment the apparatus further includes a clock for providing an output as a function of time coupled to the means for decoding and expanding, and the means for decoding and expanding a compressed code into channel, date, time-of-day and length performs the decoding and expanding as a function of the clock output.

In another specific embodiment the means for decoding and expanding the compressed code into channel, date, time-of-day and length further comprises means for converting the compressed code into a binary number, means for reordering the bits in the binary number to obtain a reordered binary compressed code, means for grouping the reordered binary compressed code into channel, date, time and length priority numbers, and means for using the channel, date, time and length priority numbers to derive the channel, date, time-of-day and length.

In yet another specific embodiment the means for blocking further comprises processor means for controlling the blocking of programs, a memory for authorized identification numbers coupled to the processor means, means coupled to the processor means for comparing the authorized identification numbers to an entered identification code, a memory for storing the program identifiers of selected programs to be blocked coupled to the processor means, and means for determining that a stored selected program identifier has a pre-determined relationship with a second output.

In a specific embodiment the means for determining further comprises a clock having date and time-of-day coupled to the second output.

In another specific embodiment the means for determining further comprises a program identifier coupled to the second output and retrieved from a signal from the television signal source.

In another specific embodiment the means for selecting programs to be blocked further comprises a remote